

SAN JUAN RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM  
COORDINATION COMMITTEE  
16 DECEMBER 1997  
FARMINGTON, NEW MEXICO

The meeting was called to order by Renne Lohofener, Geographic Manager - New Mexico.

Coordination Committee members or their representatives in attendance included:

Renne Lohofener	Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2
Patrick Schumacher	Bureau of Reclamation
Bob Krakow	Bureau of Indian Affairs
John Whipple	State of New Mexico
(for Tom Turney)	
Randy Seaholm	State of Colorado
(for Peter Evans)	
Scott McElroy	Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Les Taylor	Jicarilla Apache Indian Tribe
Dan Israel	Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe
Tom Pitts	Water Development Interests
John Leeper	Navajo Nation
(for Stanley Pollack)	

Coordination Committee members Joel Farrell (Bureau of Land Management) and John Hamill (Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6) were not present.

Biology Committee members in attendance:

Jim Brooks	Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2
Frank Pfeifer	Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6
Larry Crist	Bureau of Reclamation
Ron Bliesner	Bureau of Indian Affairs
David Propst	State of New Mexico
Bill Miller	Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Paul Holden	Jicarilla Apache Indian Tribe
Tom Wesche	Water Development Interests
Vince Lamarra	Navajo Nation

The roster of all attendees is attached.

Agenda

The agenda for the meeting (attached) was reviewed and modifications in timing of discussions and additional items for consideration by the Committee were included.

Meeting Summaries

The final summary of the February 25, 1997, meeting was distributed to the Committee. The summary of the Coordination Committee October 30, 1997, meeting in Farmington, New Mexico, was approved by consensus.

#### Procedures for San Juan River Recovery Implementation Program Committees

At its 25 February 1997 meeting, the Coordination Committee approved the use of Mr. Pitts' proposed procedures. However, the written copies of the procedures contained hand written notes and were not clear copies. Mr. Pitts was requested to provide to the Biology and Coordination Committees final copies of the procedures.

#### Water Operations Model

Biology Committee Chairman Ron Bliesner summarized the progress to date on the operations model. The model is fully configured for simulation runs but it is estimated that 2 weeks will be needed for full calibration and refinement before it can produce simulation runs for full data analysis.

Some thresholds have been identified for flows within the endangered species habitat (these do not refer to releases from Navajo Dam, but of flow rates within the habitat). Cobble transport and habitat generation exhibit a positive response to peaks within the range of 8,000 to 8,500 cfs. A negative response was noted in backwater areas at peaks higher than 8,500 cfs. Flows of about 3,000 cfs in the main channel initiates flows in secondary channels of the river. Cleaning of those secondary channels is initiated at about 5,000 cfs. In some scenarios where base flows do not exceed 2500 cfs, there is still cobble movement and spawning bar creation.

#### Schedule for Flow Recommendations

The nonnative working group of the Biology Committee will meet in Albuquerque on January 13, 1998.

The Biology Committee will meet in Farmington on February 3 to work on the simulation runs of the operations model. The Biology Committee will meet again on February 24, 1998, in Farmington, to discuss initial flow recommendations based on the model runs. The draft flow recommendations report will be provided as an internal review draft to Biology Committee members on March 15 with comments due back to Chairman Bliesner no later than March 31. It is anticipated that the draft flow recommendations report will be provided to the Coordination Committee on April 15, 1998.

#### Synthesis Report

The Synthesis Report, originally scheduled for submission June 1998 in draft to the Coordination Committee, is now tentatively rescheduled for the end of 1998 in order to focus the work of the Biology Committee on the flow recommendations. Portions of the synthesis report dealing directly with the basis for the flow recommendations will

be included in the Flow Recommendations Report. However, the discussion and analysis of other research over the past 7 years (fish health, etc.) that may not have a direct bearing on the flow recommendations will be deferred to the rescheduled Synthesis Report. Mr. Pitts requested that an outline for the Synthesis Report, similar to that provided by the Biology Committee in October for the Flow Recommendations Report, be prepared.

#### Peer Review Panel

Paul Holden summarized the correspondence provided to the Biology Committee from members of the Peer Review Panel. The Biology Committee will prepare its response to the points and issues raised by the panel at its February meeting for the consideration of the Coordination Committee prior to the distribution of the findings of the panel to the public.

The Peer Review Panel will have an expanded role in the next year as its members are requested to review the draft flow recommendations, the synthesis of the results of the 7-year research effort, and other specific work items of the Biology Committee.

#### FY 1998 Proposed Workplan and Budget

The summary cost table (attached) for the 1998 workplan was distributed to the Coordination Committee. It was noted that, although the increased costs for the Peer Review Panel were included in the table, the workplan did not include the narrative for the work to be completed by the panel. That narrative will be included in the final workplan. Several research proposals have had decreases in funding based on available monies. Should additional funds be made available, these research efforts will be funded to their original costs.

It was noted by the Biology Committee, that if additional funding does become available and the research efforts are again funded to their full extent, there would be an estimated overage of approximately \$25,000. The Biology Committee sought approval from the Coordination Committee to spend these extra funds, if they materialize, on items not now included in the workplan without returning to the Coordination Committee for line item approval. It is anticipated that the Biology Committee would direct these funds to acquisition of equipment or supporting recovery or propagation efforts. The Bureau of Reclamation, with the commitment for support of the water operations model, has incurred other costs for personnel that may utilize some of these additional funds. The Coordination Committee by consensus approved the Biology Committee's proposal to spend these funds as requested with the commitment of the Biology Committee to report back to the Coordination Committee on how the funds were spent.

The narratives of several research proposals may be altered to address necessary monitoring efforts during this next year. Such modifications will not alter the costs for any of the investigations.

Mr. Pitts and Mr. Seaholm expressed concern that the Biology Committee will be conducting field research while simultaneously writing the synthesis and flow

recommendation reports. The Biology Committee acknowledged this but clarified that many of the research proposals include significant commitment to report writing, and less field work.

The Coordination Committee approved the draft 1998 Workplan and Budget with the following modifications:

The preface of the workplan will include a discussion of the priority of completing the flow recommendations and synthesis of the research effort.

The Biology Committee will expend any extra funds received (anticipated to be approximately \$25,000) at its discretion, with a report to the Coordination Committee of how the monies were spent.

The narrative scope of work for the Peer Review Panel will be included in the final Workplan.

#### Summary Report

Paul Holden presented a review of the significant findings of the Summary Report that had previously been provided to the Coordination Committee (the findings are attached). There was no annual report prepared for 1997 because of the emphasis on the flow recommendations and other assignments of the Biology Committee.

Following Mr. Holden's presentation, Mr. Pitts asked where the fish might come from for planned augmentation activities. The Biology Committee responded that hatcheries would not be necessarily needed. Rather, the bottleneck to any full scale augmentation program is the source of eggs and larval fish. Once eggs or larval fish can be obtained, rear out ponds could be utilized to grow the fish to the optimum stocking size, without the need for a hatchery. Mr. Krakow has been requested by the Biology Committee to formulate a list of potential sites for such ponds, either with existing ponds or with the potential for pond construction.

#### Section 7 Recommendations

Mr. Pitts provided the Coordination Committee a summary of the process to date. Over the past year, little has been done by the ad hoc committee charged with discussing such recommendations. However, Mr. Pitts stated that the ad hoc committee would be reconvening in early 1998 to revisit the issues left unresolved during the past year.

#### Minor Depletions

Jennifer Fowler-Propst distributed the most recent tabulation of the minor depletions (attached). Five Bureau of Reclamation contracts have been deleted from the table following their expirations. A request for consultation for a depletion of approximately

500 acre-feet for the proposed Potato Processing Plant on the Navajo Indian Irrigation Project has been received by the Service.

#### Long Range Funding

Messrs. Pitts and Whipple updated the Coordination Committee on the proposed legislation. The New Mexico Interstate Streams Commission will consider whether to support the legislation at its upcoming January 1998 meeting.

The Tribes have not elected to either support or oppose the draft legislation, based on concerns of where the money would be taken in order to support the efforts of the two recovery programs, and how the funding would be divided between the two recovery programs on an annual basis if full funding were not appropriated for both.

#### San Juan Recovery Implementation Program Coordinator Duties

In response to Mr. Pitts' request, Chairman Lohofener will review the listed duties of the Service's Coordinator position and Mr. Pitts' proposed additions and provide his response to the Coordination Committee at its next meeting.

#### Animas-La Plata Alternatives

Messrs. Israel and McElroy summarized the results of the discussions between proponents and opponents of the proposed Animas-La Plata Project and the alternatives that were formulated by that process. Two alternatives, the Environmentalists' Proposal, and A-LP "Lite" were forwarded to the Department of the Interior and will be the subject of a 6-month study. The tribes did not accept the Environmentalists' Alternative for two major reasons as outlined by Mr. McElroy: 1) acquisition of lands and water rights to provide water to the tribes would take too long, would be too uncertain an avenue by which a firm and reliable source of water could be obtained; and 2) water rights provided by A-LP would not be subject to abandonment/forfeiture whereas water rights acquired through land purchase under State water law would not enjoy the same protection. Additionally, A-LP Lite is based on the 57,100 acre-feet already addressed in a biological opinion with the development for the tribes scaled to that amount of water.

#### Southwest Strategy

Chairman Lohofener provided the Committee with a synopsis of the ongoing efforts of the federal community to address resource and litigation issues in the southwest (at this time defined as Arizona and New Mexico). The federal community has agreed to prioritize work loads for consultation in order to address the most sensitive and litigious issues first (allocating staff resources within existing budgets of the agencies); the federal agencies will, by March 15, 1998, develop a strategy to guide working and cooperating with non-federal partners; and by June 1998 the federal agencies will develop a strategy to address streamlining consultation and project review. Chairman

Lohofener will send copies of the strategy to Committee members for their information.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Coordination and Biology Committees will be held in Farmington, New Mexico, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm on February 25, 1998.

Attachments